



THE FUNNY

BY
JOE
ZABEL
+
STEVE
WILLIS

YOU KNOW, SUSAN, I JUST
CAN'T FIGURE WHY YOU EVER
MARRIED A GEEK LIKE ME!
MOST PEOPLE FIND MY
PROFESSION PRETTY MORBID!

YOU FORGET WHAT MY
PROFESSION IS!



HA! CAREER SEANCE COORDINATOR!

SO I END UP WITH THEM AFTER
YOU'RE THROUGH WITH THEM!

SEANCES! HARD TO BELIEVE
THAT SORTA HOCUS-POCUS IS
STILL GOING ON IN THE
22ND CENTURY!

WELL, I CAN'T CLAIM TO HAVE
SECOND SIGHT MYSELF, BUT I'VE
SEEN ENOUGH TO KNOW ONE THING:
NOBODY EVER REALLY DIES AS
LONG THEY'RE REMEMBERED.
KEEP THAT THOUGHT IN MIND...

AND DARLING?

YES, SUSAN?

YOU WON'T EVER
FORGET ME, WILL
YOU?

FORGET YOU?? WHAT KIND OF
DAMN-FOOL QUESTION IS THAT??
I LOVE YOU...

... LOVE YOU ...

... LUH YOOO ...

... HUH!?

OH.

ZIP!

MORNING, BOSS. HOW WAS YOUR REST PERIOD?

NOT SO HOT, LARRY.

YOU DREAMED OF HER AGAIN?

RIGHT.

AS ALWAYS, IT TOOK HIM A MOMENT TO REORIENT HIMSELF. HE WAS DAVE KASPER, AN INTER-STELLAR CORONER. HIS WIFE, SUSAN, HAD DIED IN AN ACCIDENT ON EARTH SEVERAL YEARS AGO. HE HAD LEFT EARTH ON ASSIGNMENT IN A HYPERSPATIAL VEHICLE.

MAY I DIG OUT THE FREE PRIZE, BOSS?

UH...SURE...
BE MY GUEST.

CHOMP
CHEW
DIGEST

PUKO
FLAKES

HE HAD COME ACROSS SPACE TO VISIT A DEAD AND SILENT SHIP...

PREPARE FOR
BOARDING,
LARRY.

ERK...
ERK...
ERK...

THE CETACEAN, ONE OF COUNTLESS DEAD SHIPS WANDERING THE UNIVERSE FROM THE PRE-F.T.L. COLONIAL ERA. THE EMPTINESS, THE DISTANCES, THE YEARS OF TRAVEL, ALL SAPPED AWAY AT THE CREW'S WILL TO SURVIVE.

SOMETIMES THE VOYAGERS WOULD LOSE THEIR SANITY SLOWLY OVER THE YEARS, THE SUICIDES AND "ACCIDENTS" DULY RECORDED... UNTIL THE END.

OTHER TIMES, THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY WOULD COLLAPSE IN A SINGLE NIGHT OF MADNESS, CARNAGE, AND IMPOLITE BEHAVIOR...



...SUCH A SHIP WAS THE CETACEAN.

HERE IN THE INCONCEIVABLE DISTANCES BETWEEN STARS, WHAT DID IT MATTER WHO THEY WERE OR HOW THEY DIED? WHAT DIFFERENCE COULD IT POSSIBLY MAKE?

BUT A RIDICULOUS CARING REACHED OUT FROM THE PLANET EARTH TO ITS LOST INHABITANTS. KASPER WAS THE AGENT OF THAT CARING. HE WAS HERE TO SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT.

ANOTHER DAY,
ANOTHER
MILLION
DOLLARS.



NO
EXIT
←



SUBJECTS HILLMAN AND DRAKE WERE ENGAGED IN A GAME OF "GO FISH" AT THE TIME OF DEATH.

AND IS THIS THEIR MURDERER?

WHO WAS WINNING?

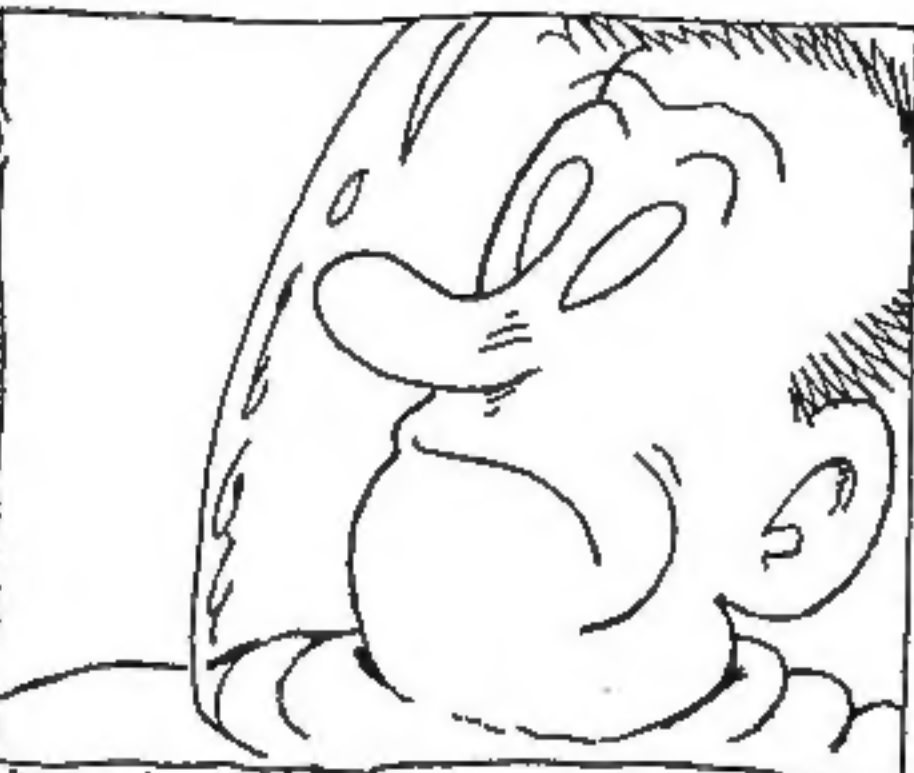
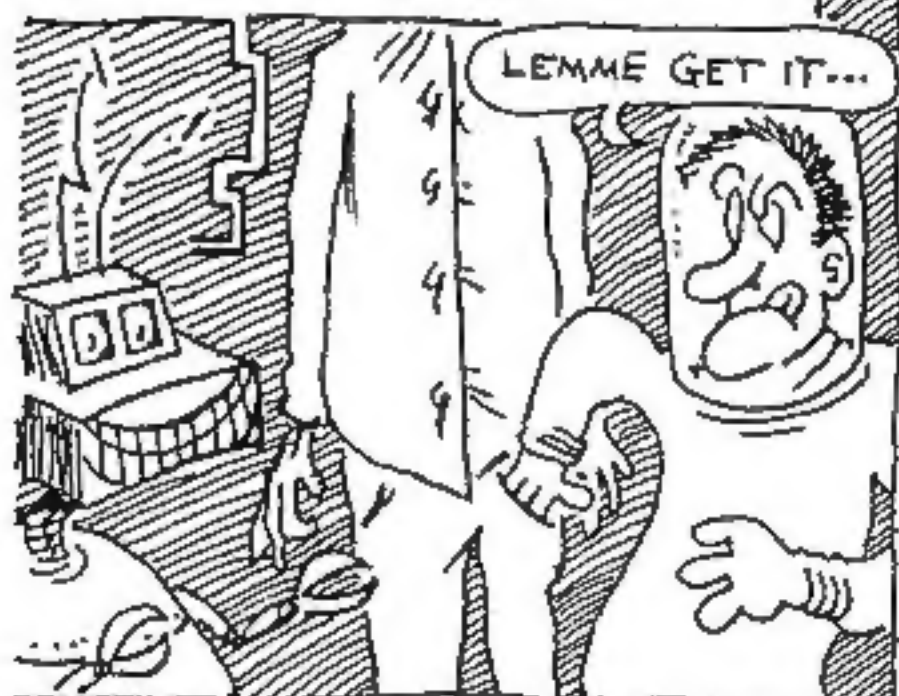
IMPOSSIBLE TO TELL.
DEATH WAS INSTANTANEOUS
TO BOTH...

HARD TO TELL. SUICIDE IS INDICATED BY THE STOOL KICKED OUT BENEATH THE SUBJECT'S FEET.



WHAT IS THE SUBJECT'S NAME?

LEMME GET IT...



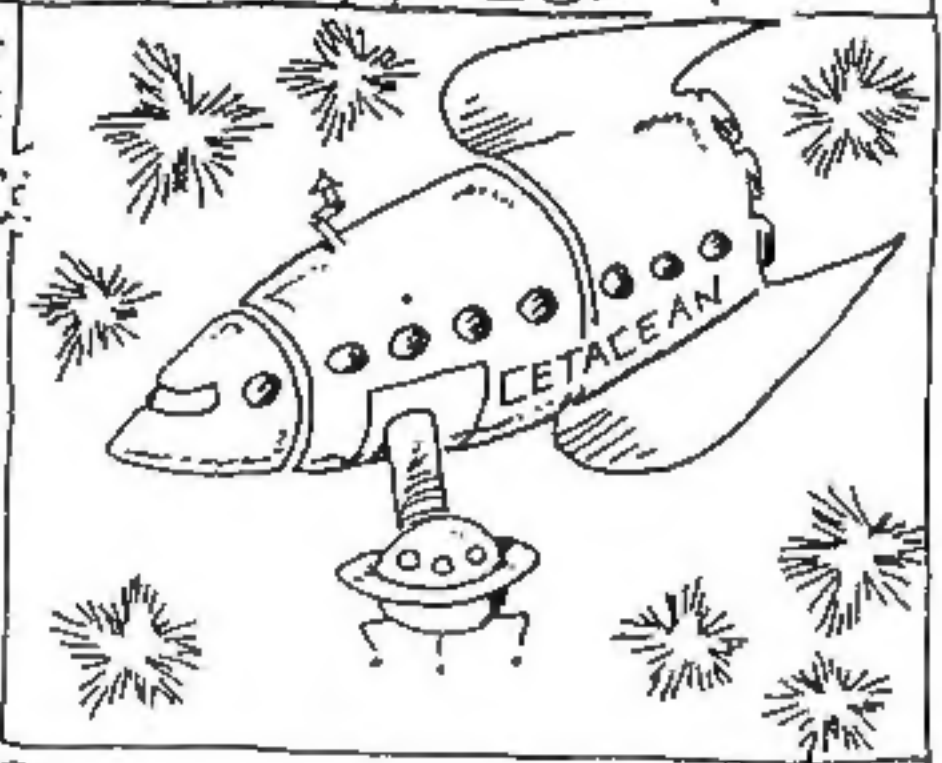
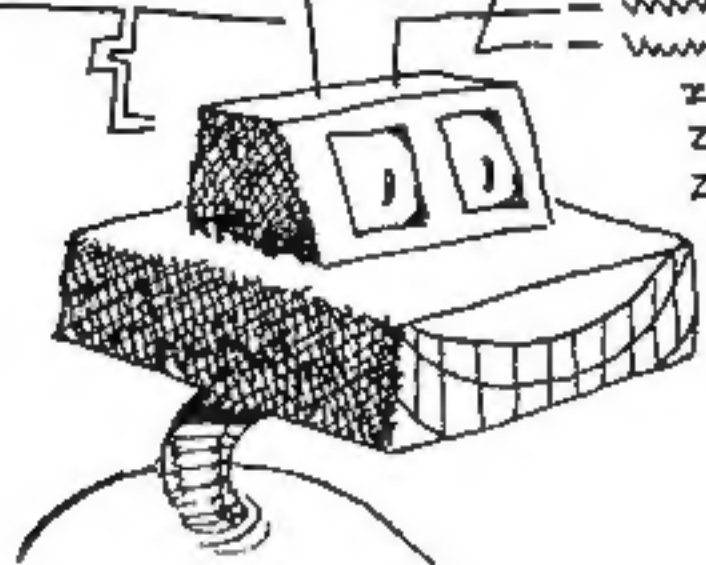
YOU GET IT, OKAY LARRY?

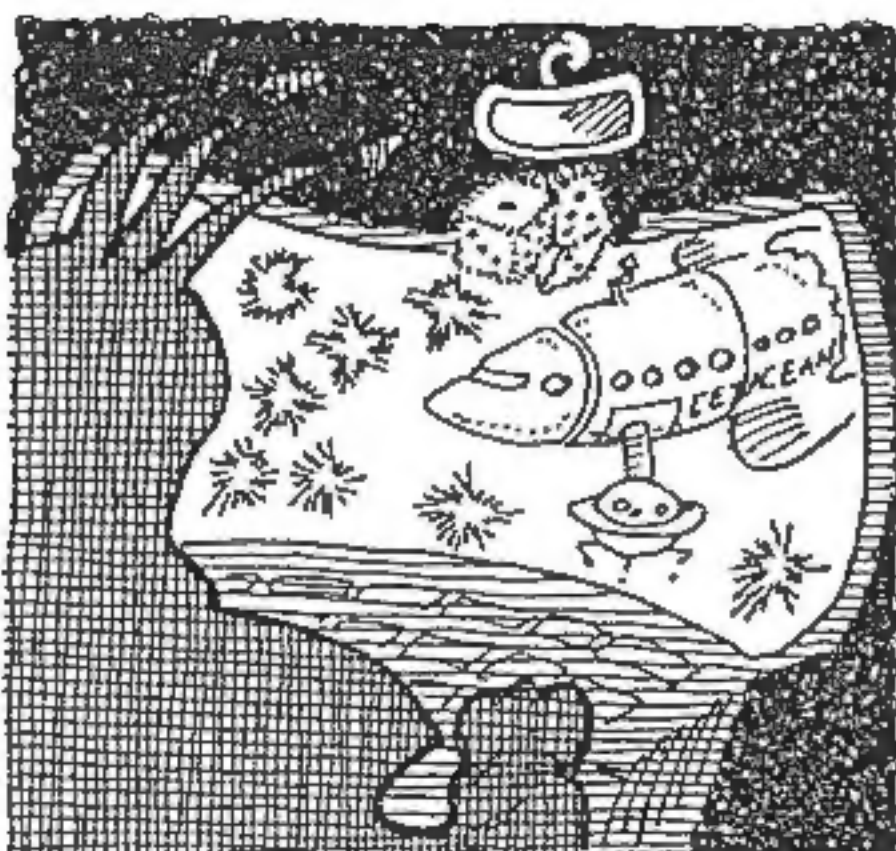
SURE, BOSS.



WAIT A MINUTE, BOSS. WE'RE BEING SUMMONED BACK. SOMETHING'S COME UP.

ZEEK!
ZEEK!
ZEEK!





FROM TIP TO TIP IT MEASURES 27.13 KILOMETERS.

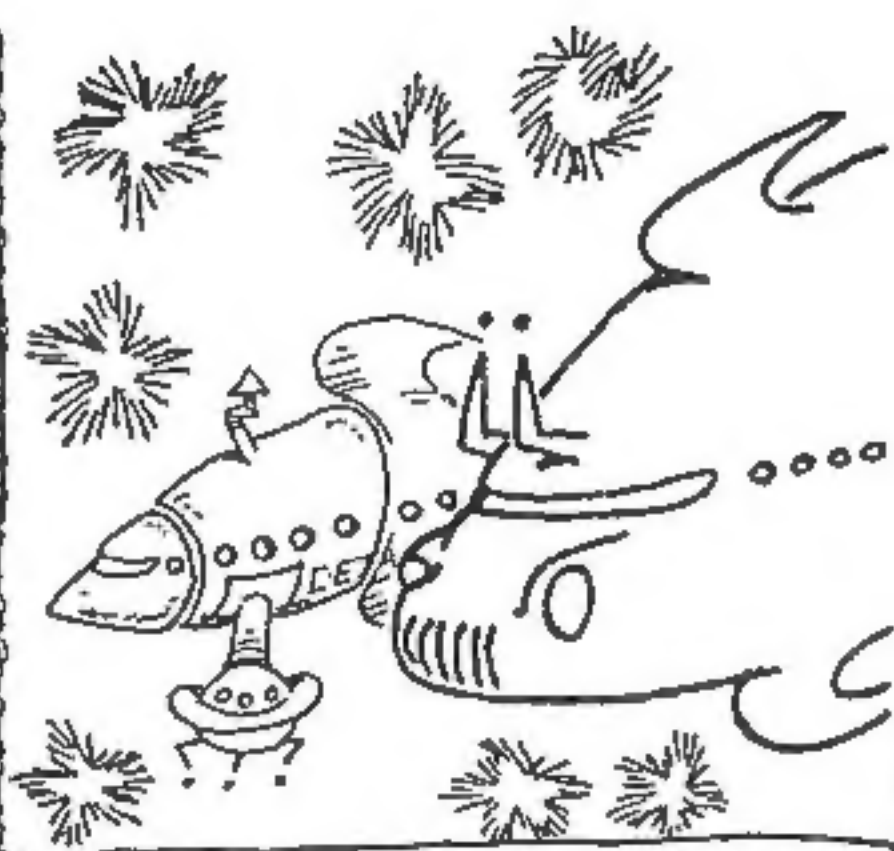
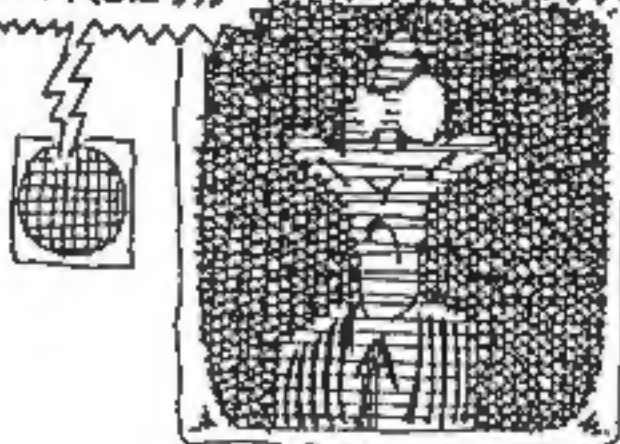
JEEZ LOUISE!

THE CONFIGURATION MATCHES NO CATALOGED SPACE VEHICLE.

IT'S AN OOGLY-BOOGLY ALIEN, MY GOD!!!



THE FIRST THING I WANT TO TELL YOU IS, RELAX!!! THE BEST MINDS IN GOVERNMENT HAVE FORESEEN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES. EVERYTHING IS UNDER CONTROL!!!



WHAT CONSTITUTES A WATERSHED IN HUMAN HISTORY? THE INVENTION OF THE WHEEL? EINSTEIN'S THEORIES? NEWAVE COMIX? WHAT LAY BEFORE KASPAR WAS AN EVENT THAT DWARFED THESE. FOR THE FIRST TIME, MAN WOULD TRY TO COMMUNICATE WITH NOT-MAN. AFTERWARDS, EVERYTHING WOULD BE DIFFERENT!



ARE YOU INSANE?! WE'VE GOT 500 MURDERED CORPSES ON THIS SHIP! HOW'S OUR LITTLE FRIEND GONNA UNDERSTAND THAT?!



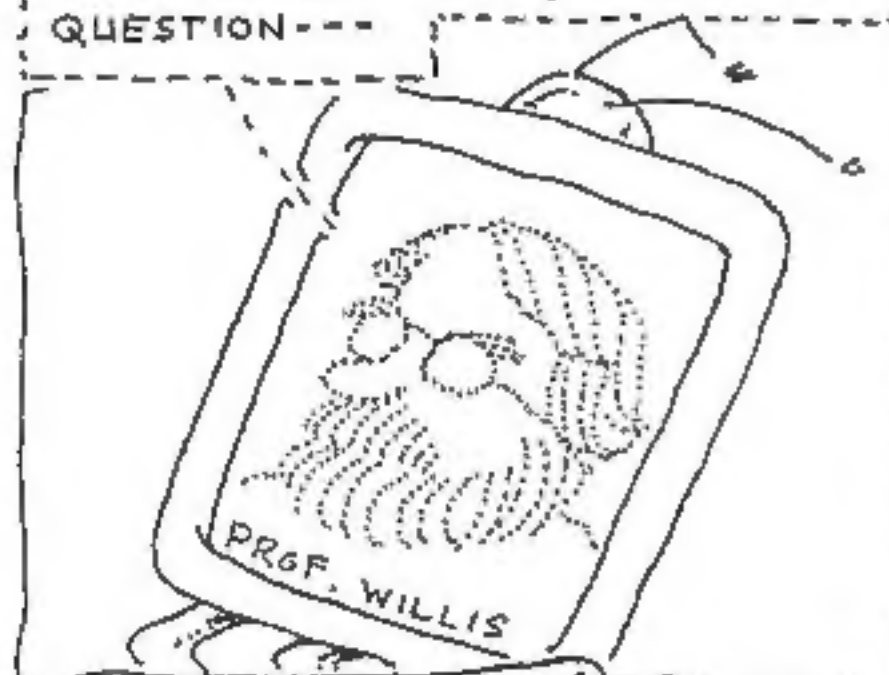
WE HAVE DETERMINED THAT FOR THIS MOMENTOUS OCCASION, IT WILL BE NECESSARY FOR A MEMBER OF THE HUMAN CREW TO ENCOUNTER THE ALIEN, "AS IT WERE", FACE-TO-FACE.



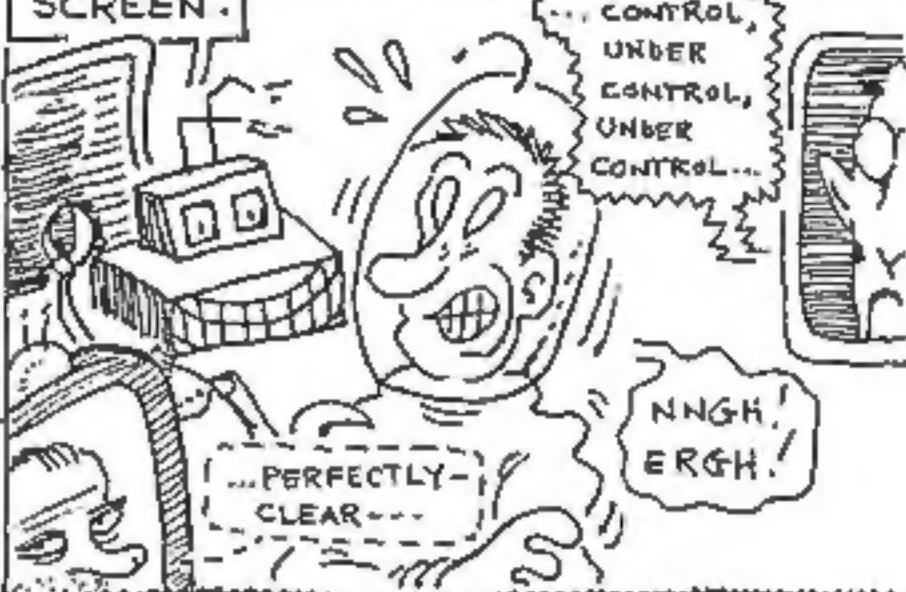
HOWEVER, THE ACTUAL COMMUNICATION WITH THE ALIEN SPECIES WILL BE FACILITATED BY AN AUDIO-VISUAL AUTOMATION PROGRAMMED WITH REPRESENTATIVE CULTURAL DATA.



TO-BE-OR-NOT-TO-BE, THAT-IS-THE-QUESTION---



DAVE, THE ALIEN HAS ENTERED THE CETACEAN. WE'VE GOT HIM ON THE SCREEN.



OH MY LORD!!
I THINK I'M GONNA
PUKE!!

TAKE OFF YOUR
HELMET FIRST,
BOSS.

LARRY, WHAT THE HELL IS THAT...
THING... DOING?!!



WHY'D YOU BLANK OUT
THE SCREEN?

I THOUGHT YOU
MIGHT PUKE.

IT LOOKED LIKE IT WAS...

WE CAN'T JUDGE
IT BY OUR STAND-
ARDS, DAVE.

...LIKE IT WAS...

EATING...
A CORPSE!!!

BINK!

CLICK!

CORRECT. IT HAS INGESTED THREE
OF THE CETACEAN CREW.

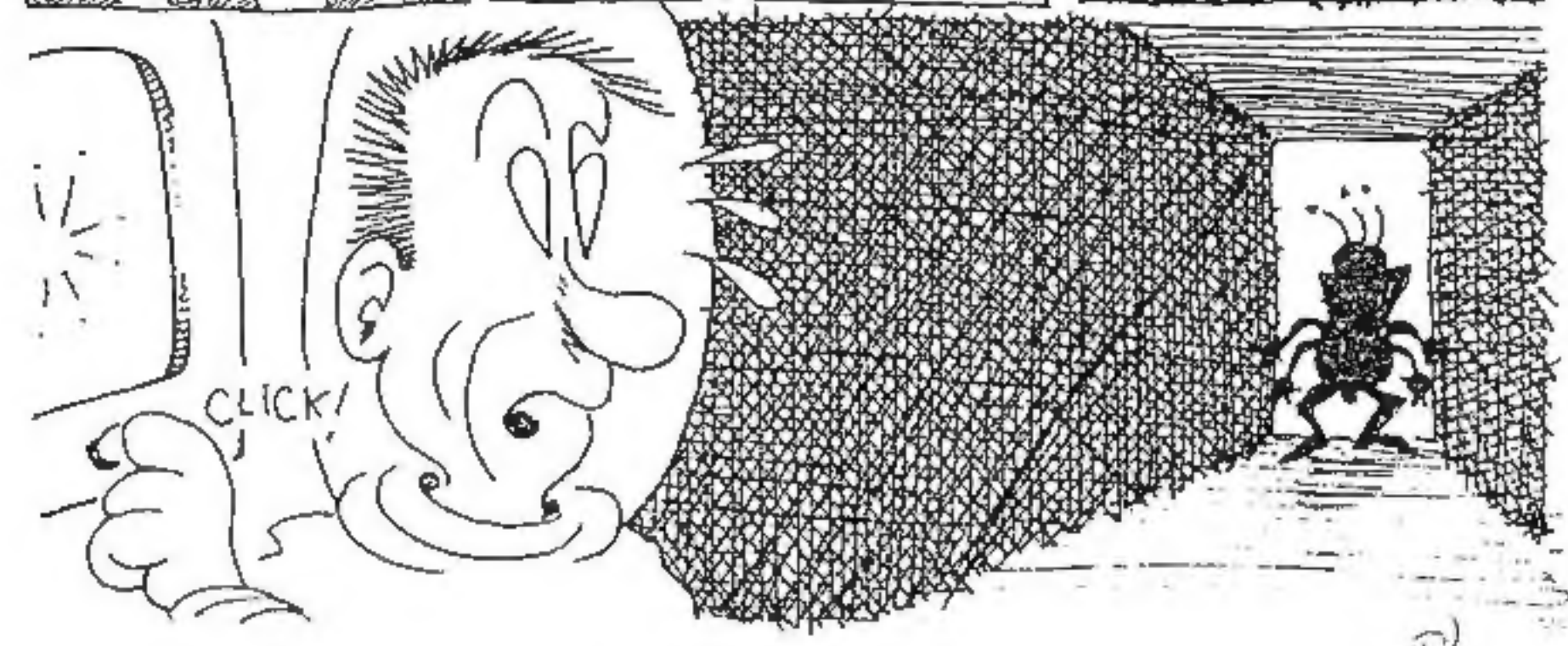
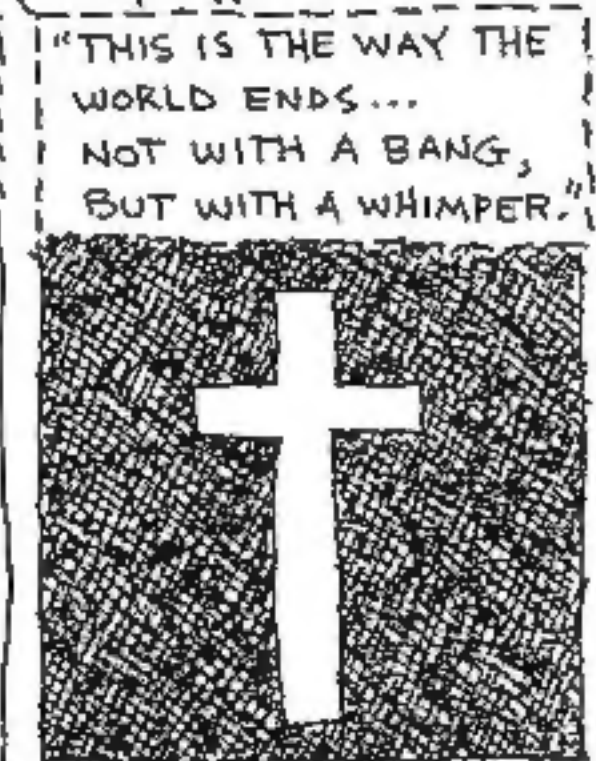
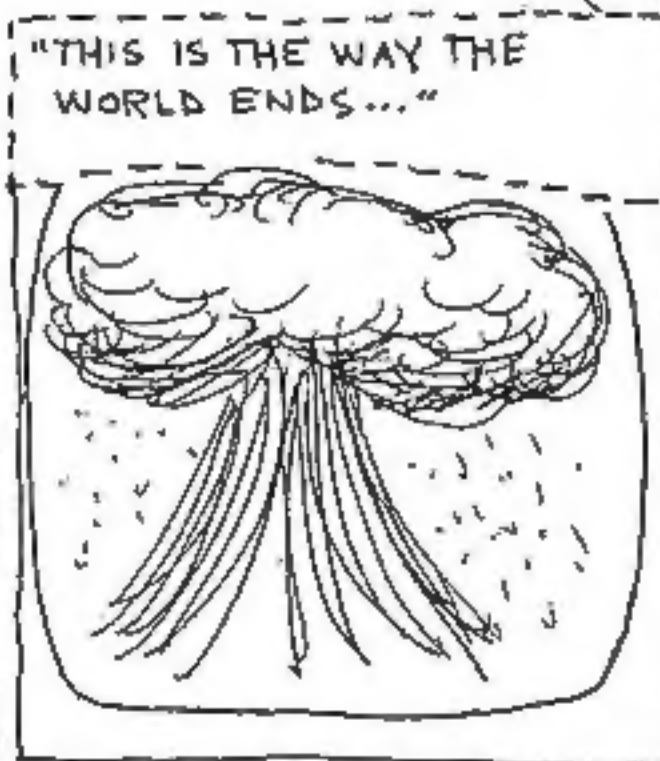
"FIRST THERE IS A MOUNTAIN
THEN THERE IS NO MOUNTAIN
THEN THERE IS."

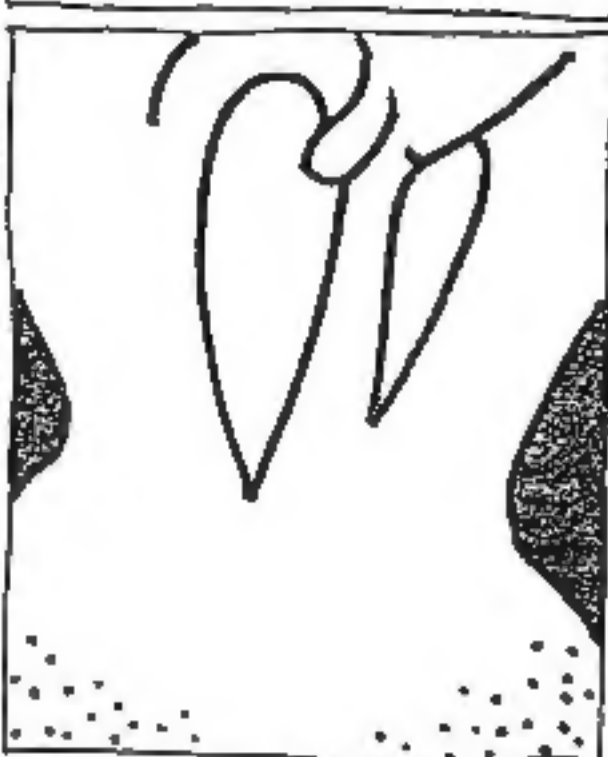
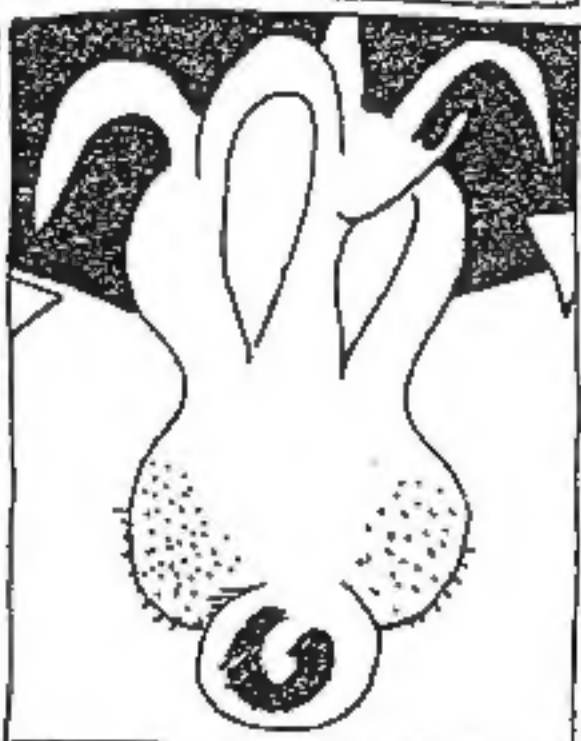
THIS
WAY
TO
WEIRD
ALIEN
→

"WE ONLY CAME TO SLEEP,
WE ONLY CAME TO DREAM,
IT IS NOT TRUE, NO, IT IS NOT TRUE,
THAT WE CAME TO LIVE ON THE EARTH."



"'PROPHET,' SAID I, 'THING OF EVIL!'
 'PROPHET STILL, IF BIRD OR DEVIL!'
 'BY THAT HEAVEN THAT BENDS ABOVE US,
 BY THAT GOD WE BOTH ADORE
 TELL THIS SOUL WITH SORROW LADEN IF,
 WITHIN THE DISTANT AIDEN,
 IT SHALL CLASP A SAINTED MAIDEN
 WHOM THE ANGELS NAME LENORE --
 CLASP A RARE AND RADIANT MAIDEN
 WHOM THE ANGELS NAME LENORE.'
 QUOTH THE RAVEN,
 'NEVERMORE!'"

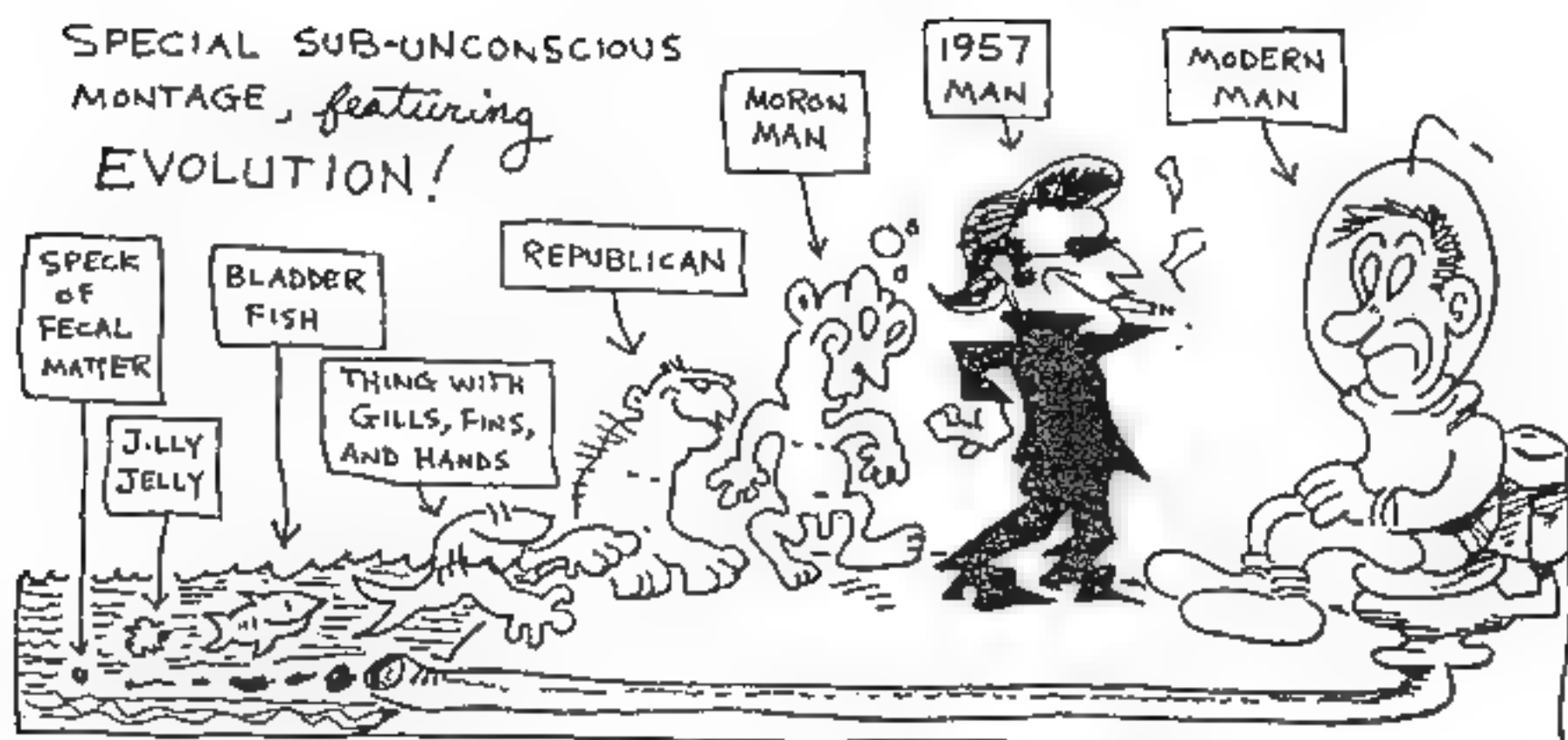




≡BELCH!≡



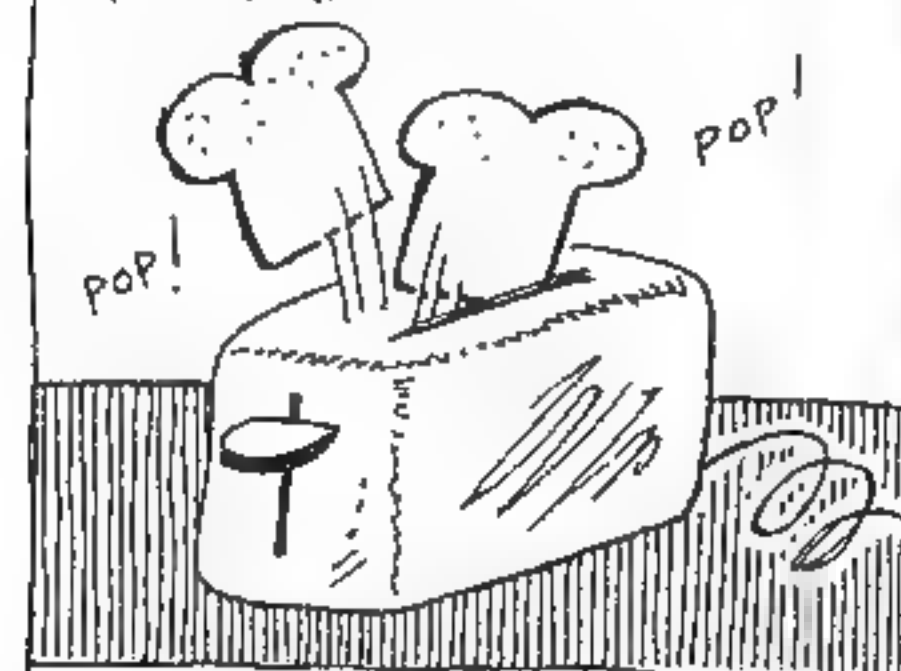
SPECIAL SUB-UNCONSCIOUS
MONTAGE, featuring
EVOLUTION!



SPECIAL SUB-SUB-LOWER BASEMENT CONSCIOUS MONTAGE OF
"THE BIG PICTURE."



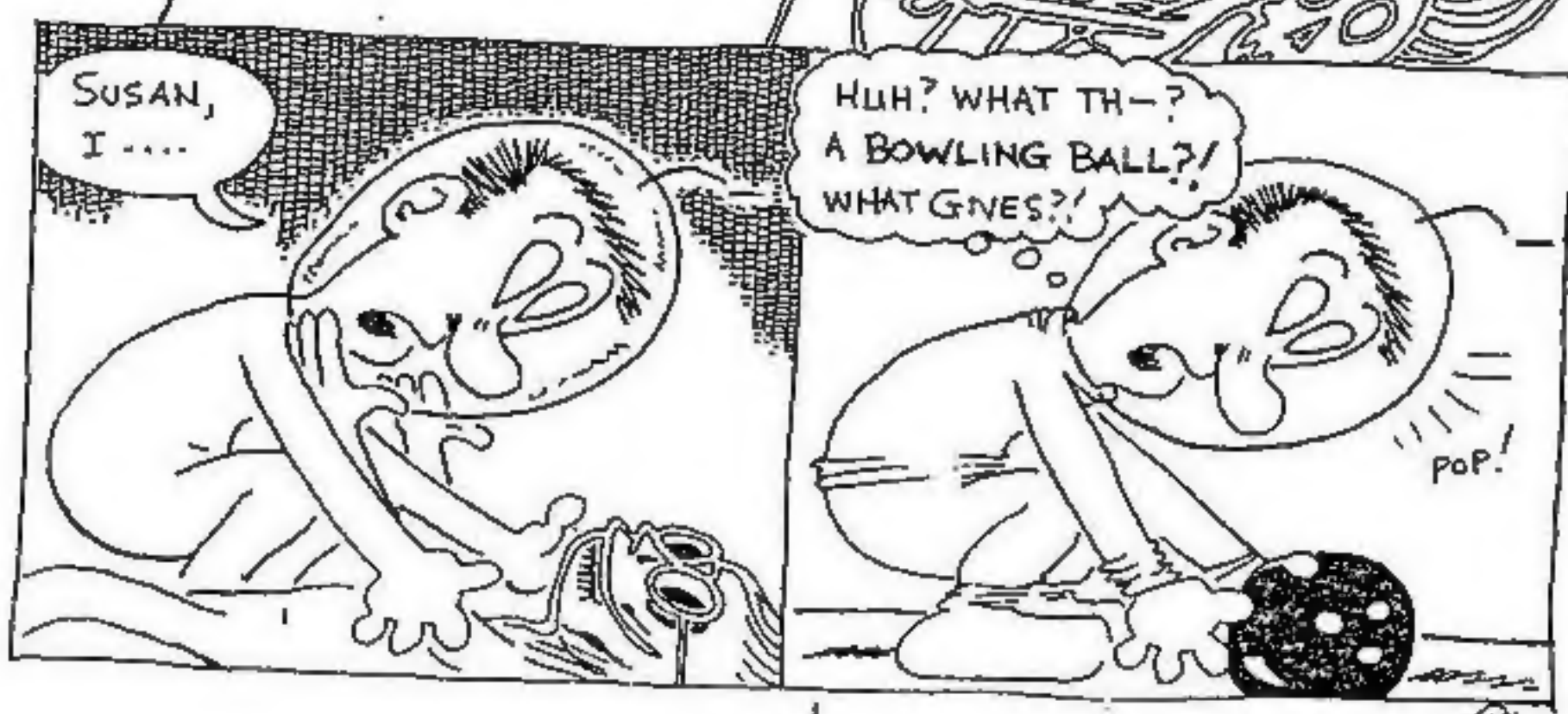
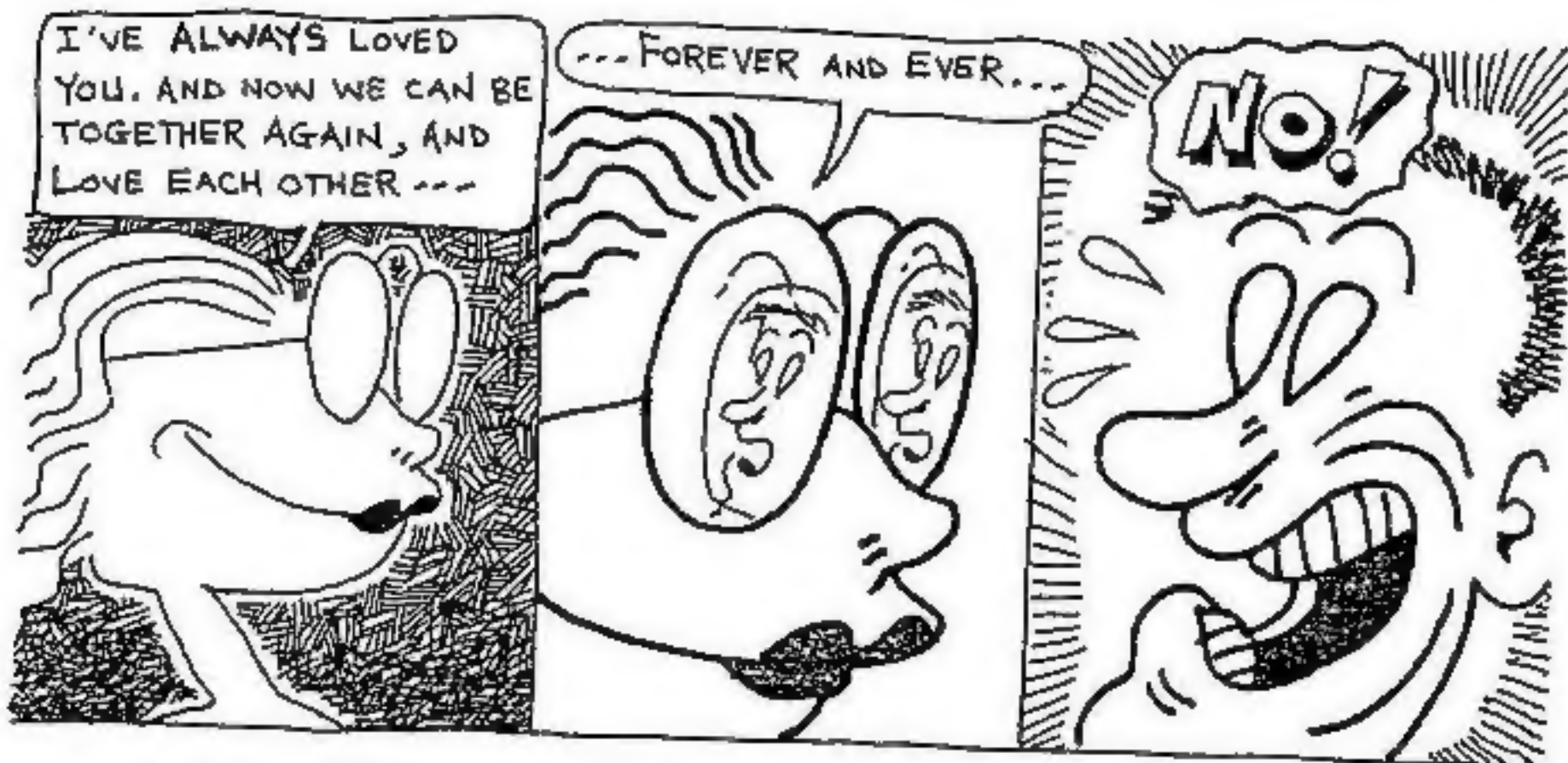
MORE MONTAGE SHOTS. DO THEY REPRESENT **GOOD** OR **Evil** (OR THAT VAST UNIVERSE IN-BETWEEN?) ?



NOW BACK TO THE STORY----







UHHH... WHAT HAPPENED?

WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER?

THE ALIEN CRAFT AND
ITS PASSENGER LEFT
AT 0700 HOURS.

IT'S A JUMBLE.

IMPRESSIONS, I DON'T KNOW. I
HAD THE STRONG FEELING THAT THE
ALIEN UNDERSTOOD THE CONCEPT
OF DEATH...

... AND ALSO, MAYBE, THE CONCEPT
OF LOVE.

THERE'S SOMETHING WE DON'T UNDERSTAND ABOUT THE ALIEN VESSEL'S
MANNER OF DEPARTURE.

WHAT?

IT MOVED IN A STRAIGHT LINE AWAY FROM THE CETACEAN FOR A DISTANCE OF 2.7 MILLION KILOMETERS BEFORE SHIFTING INTO HYPERSPACE. THE MANEUVER SEEMINGLY HAD NO PRACTICAL FUNCTION.

THIS SPACE IS GOOD FOR NOTHING AT ALL.

IT TRANSMITTED STRANGE SIGNALS BACK TO US.

I GET IT! IT WAS DRAWING AN ARROW TO ITS HOME!

SNAP!

CRACKLE
POP

ZABEL ENDING:

... SOMEWHERE, OUT THERE.

WILLIS ENDING:

DID YOU TRANSLATE THOSE "STRANGE SIGNALS" THE ALIEN SENT?

YES, IT READS:

"THERE ONCE WAS A MAN FROM NANTUCKET, WHOSE..."

STOP! STOP! I LIKE ZABEL'S ENDING BETTER.

FINI